

- HB 61

EXHIBIT 65
 DATE 1-22-07
 HB 61



F. H. STOLTZE LAND & LUMBER COMPANY

Lumber Manufacturers

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Established in 1912
 Affiliations:



Charter Member

January 11, 2007

Chairman -- Walter McNutt
 House Natural Resource Committee
 Montana Legislature
 Helena, MT 59620-1800

Dear Chairman McNutt:

On Monday, January 8, 2007, you considered HB61. I have attached a copy of my points presented at the hearing.

I believe there does need to be some adjustments to the existing Law. Attached is a proposal for amending this legislation.

If you have questions, please call.

Sincerely yours,

F.H. STOLTZE LAND & LBR CO.

Ronald Buentemeier

Ronald Buentemeier
 Vice-President/General Manager

RB/hl

ENC:

CC: Ralph Heinert - V Ch
 Ron Erickson - V Ch
 Duane Ankney
 Debby Barrett
 Jill Cohenour
 Sue Dickenson

Betsy Hands
 Gordon Hendrick
 Carol Lambert
 Scott Mendenhall
 JP Pomnichowski
 John (Jack) Ross

Veronica Small-Eastman
 Kendall Van Dyk
 Chas Vincent
 Krista Lee Evans-Staffer

Finthead Valley



Member Since 1960

Proposal for HB61

1. Retain current legislation language that caps Forest landowner portion to 1/3 of budget.
2. Increase fee to \$40 for each landowner and raise per acre fee to 25 cents per acre per year for each acre in excess of 20 acres. Over the next 10 years each may increase not more than 50%.
3. Revise Administrative Rules #36.10.161 to reflect the increase in the number of small tracts less than 20 acres. The 50-50 percentage should then be adjusted accordingly.
4. Fund County Coop Program from General Fund unless funds are used in Counties where Forest Landowner assessment funds are collected.



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January 8, 2007



Charter Member

House Natural Resource Committee
Montana State Legislature

RE: House Bill 61

Dear Walter McNutt, Chairman, and Committee Members:

Today you are considering HB61 which will adjust the collection of fees paid by forest landowners for fire protection on their lands. Fire protection is very important to forest landowners and each of us support this effort by DNRC and feel we should pay our fair share.

However, I cannot support this bill in its current form. I would suggest the following changes.

- 1) There must be a cap on the amount of money paid by forest landowners.
- 2) The current Administrative Rule #36.10.161 must be reviewed and changed to reflect the current ownership sizes in Montana. Division of the assessment with 50% to owners of 20 acres or less and 50% to greater than 20 acres does not fit ownership in Montana today.
- 3) The use of monies collected from the approximate 5 million acres of forest land to fund the County Co-operative Program must change. I believe this currently is approximately \$1.5 million dollars. This money should come from the general fund, surplus, and/or assessment in counties where it is used.

Flathead Valley



Member Since 1960

4) There needs to be reconciling of the acres that the Fire Protection Fee is collected on. Currently the DNRC has a definition of forest lands and the Revenue Department has another definition.

5) As a representative of a large landowner I would support a 10 to 20 percent increase in the fees collected. I personally qualify as a small forest landowner and would support a similar increase in the small landowner fee. This support is given "only" if the fees collected are used on forest land!

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Ronald Buentemeier
Vice-President / General Manager

RB/tc



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FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL

Date: 1-11-07

To: (Firm Name) House Natural Resources Committee

(Attn): Nancy Kraft

From: Alex

Message: Letter for committee members
from Ra Luerter

Number of Pages to follow: 4

FAX NO. 406-892-1612